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7. — *The Marquis of Lossie: A Romance.* By GEORGE MACDONALD. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co. 1877. pp. 245.

To say that the author of "The Marquis of Lossie" ranks among the first novelists of the day is perhaps hardly to render justice to the place which Mr. MacDonald holds in the estimation of a large class of readers. With these he is even more popular than Mrs. Lewes (George Eliot) or Charles Reade. We can quite understand the fascination which he exercises over the minds of his admirers. Mrs. Lewes allows her love of subtle analysis of character, and a thin and often trite metaphysical vein to interfere so seriously with the action of her novels, that the interest of the reader flags, and a sense of weariness and discontent steals over him, even while he recognizes the genius and fine literary faculty of the author. Charles Reade, on the other hand, never allows the "moral" of the story to interfere with its action, but the moral is too often a hobby of his own rather than one which interests the general reader. The abuses of private lunatic asylums and of prisons, or the bigotry and narrowness of the medical profession, to denounce which his last novel, "A Woman-Hater," seems to have been written, may justify attack, but they do not appeal to a widespread popular sympathy. The charm of George MacDonald is, that, while the interest of his narrative is so absorbing that it is difficult to tear one's self away from it, the moral lesson which it conveys is thoroughly suited to the reflecting mind of the day. The thoughts which issue so spontaneously from the lips of his leading characters are exactly those which his readers have been thinking, and want to see expressed in words: the problems which, in "The Marquis of Lossie," puzzle Lady Clementina Thornicroft, are precisely those which are puzzling thousands of the best and most intelligent women of society; and the sentiments which the author puts into the mouth of the Marquis himself will find their response in the breast of every noble and generous nature that is struggling to emancipate itself from those narrow and dogmatic formulas, which the highest religious instinct revolts from as opposed to the spirit of pure Christianity. It is refreshing in these days to meet an author whose whole effort and aim seems to be to do good to his readers, and to do it with all humility and simplicity, for Mr. MacDonald's hatred of pedantry and cant is a conspicuous feature of his teaching. We only regret that so many of the finest and most original ideas should be clothed in dialect of the broadest and most incomprehensible Scotch. Mr. MacDonald increases the difficulty by not spelling his Scotch in the conventional way, but exactly

as it sounds in a part of Scotland where it sounds the most uncouth ; the result is, that the reader is either tempted to pass over the gem that lies concealed by this rough setting altogether, or is obliged laboriously to puzzle out the meaning of the Scotch words. The plot of this "romance," as the author properly calls it, is as novel as it is ingenious. Whether it is an incident possible in the civilization of the present day we leave our readers to judge. They will not be the less interested in the story because it is improbable, and even verges on the fantastic ; the charm of style, the sustained action, the noble vitality, which pervades the book will carry them along in spite of its improbabilities. The fact that Lady Florimel jumped on board a cutter in the Thames in her riding habit, and with two men and a boy sailed to the North of Scotland, is a startling event to take place in the height of the London season, but it is by no means impossible, and at the pace at which young ladies go nowadays it may soon cease to be improbable. We fear her intimacy with the artist while she is flirting with Lord Liftore is neither impossible nor improbable in the existing state of society. Lady Clementina and Malcolm are by far the most attractive and interesting characters in the book ; the former, while absolutely true to nature, is a type of the modern aristocrat which we do not remember to have seen introduced before into any work of fiction. Altogether, we consider the "Marquis of Lossie" the best English novel which has appeared this year.

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8. — *The Cruise of Her Majesty's Ship Challenger.* By W. J. SPRY, R. N.  
New York.: Harper and Brothers. 1877. pp. 388.

THE Challenger left England in December, 1872, and after visiting Lisbon and Gibraltar sailed for the Canary Islands and West Indies, thence to Bermuda and Halifax, returning by way of the Azores to the Cape de Verde Islands, thence to Brazil, Tristan d'Acunha, and the Cape of Good Hope. This completed the first year of the cruise, in the course of which many valuable results were obtained by trawling and dredging, and much important knowledge was acquired in regard to the depth, currents, and temperature of the ocean traversed. From the Cape the expedition cruised in southern latitudes, examining islands little known or previously unexplored, until the Antarctic ice-barrier was reached. Thence, having been with difficulty disengaged from the ice, the Challenger visited Australia, New Guinea, the Philippine Islands, and Malay Archipelago, and so to Hong Kong, where she refitted, having completed her second year of exploration. The following year was spent in Japan and among the South Sea Islands, and in May, 1876, she reached